

socialist standard

April 2013
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Chavez finally leaves office



Venezuela and 'petro-socialism'



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The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join the Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.



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APRIL 2013

Editorial

Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela. Deceased.

FOR HUGO Chavez, there were no affectionate obituaries in the corporate press last month to describe his qualities and achievements and to ignore his less savoury actions as a holder of state power. Obits of this kind are reserved for the deaths of Western leaders, their allies and their puppets, and Chavez was none of these. As almost every newspaper and TV channel told us, he was 'a controversial figure,' which in media code means a politician that does not support Western interests. We were invited to disapprove.

Outside the exclusive circle of the corporate media, in the independent leftist press and on leftist websites another Chavez was evident: Chavez, the hero, the reformer, the charismatic leader, the man with the common touch. Here we were invited to celebrate Chavez's rejection of the West and Western capitalist values, and his building of a new form of popular socialism in Venezuela, spearheaded by social reforms.

Political obits of whatever colour are brand labels which demand only that we identify where our loyalties lie. In reality, Chavez's rejection of the West and his proclamation of a new popular form of 'socialism' were rhetorical moves in a political game that had nothing to do with economic fact. During his presidency, he kept open the doors on the flow of Western capital into Venezuela, while introducing a familiar programme of nationalisation and social reform. He did not cease to preside over an exploitative capitalist economy, nor did he cut off economic relationships with the West.

Where now for the country? Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's

vice president and named successor appears determined to hold on to power and is using his control of the state to crush opposition. It seems likely then that Maduro will lead the Chavistas back into power at the forthcoming elections and, if he does, it is doubtful that there will be any immediate change of policy – barring some unforeseen political upheaval.

Nevertheless, whoever fills the vacuum left by Chavez, and whatever policies they pursue, there remain certain mundane realities of capitalism that the new leaders of Venezuela must acknowledge and the country's working people must endure. The Venezuelan economy must remain competitive on the international markets or it will die. Workers must therefore be exploited. Whether they are exploited by the Chavista state through its nationalised industries, by local corporations or by new employers likely to be brought in to support the country's undercapitalised economy will make little difference to their lives.

The degree to which they are exploited will continue to depend on fluctuations in the economy, on their own capacity and will to resist the inevitable downward pressure on their incomes, and on government policy. The fact of their exploitation, though, is inevitable. So is their relative poverty, their limited freedom of choice, and the lack of control they have over their lives. None of this will change until they and working people everywhere have ceased to put their faith in governments and charismatic politicians whatever claims and promises they make.



Already there is talk of military applications, including using mind-controlled animals and even insects as surveillance and 'assassination drones'. Advertisers of the future will be wetting themselves at the potential for subliminal persuasion and stratospheric profits. Civil Rights groups will be passing sleepless nights bathed in beads of sweat at the idea of Orwell's Thought Police coming to life.

Surely not in a liberal democracy? people will cry. But who says the future of capitalism involves democracy? Liberal democracies are only liberal because police states are too inefficient and expensive and popular consent is by far an easier thing to manage. With surveillance that can peer right into our private thoughts,

what capitalist state would need to bother asking our consent? Imagine a future ruled by China or North Korea, but without their present hearts and flowers liberalism. Or worse, a global theocratic regime along the lines of Iran or Saudi Arabia, or if the Christian fundamentalists get their way, the Second Coming of the Catholic Church, with free inquiry replaced by a fearful Inquisition. Surely, once the final frontier is breached, our minds will not be our own, our ego will be demolished and our slavery will be complete.

Of course it's quite possible that this sort of conspiracy theorist's porn fantasy won't happen for the simple reason that we will have killed ourselves off long before the technology gets to that point. If global warming doesn't do it, nuclear war might, or a viral pandemic or an antibiotic-busting pestilence, or even just cyberhacked chaos and civil collapse. The end of the world will be a dying whimper across a desolate landscape crawling with cockroaches and escaped laboratory rats living on corpses and old chewed copies of the Daily Mail.

Lots of workers are so depressed that they do think like this. If you ran an MRI scan of their brains it would show a black cloud around the words 'I give up'. Or it would be a sign saying 'Not at home – on holiday in la-la land', because the result of a depressing outlook is a retreat into denial. Wouldn't it be better to contemplate a future that's just as plausible as any of the above, but one which is infinitely more positive? Instead of conspiring in our own oppression we should be aspiring to our collective liberation, by discussing how the amazing developments of science could be used for good in a society based on the common good. Optimists embrace the future while pessimists run away from it, and socialists are optimists by definition. The technology of telepathy doesn't have to be threateningly invasive, or about mind control. It could be the path to a truly neural internet, the power of the brain unleashed in a cognitive and communicative revolution that would make our present state of knowledge look like Stone Age flint scrapings. If you can't feel inspired by that you're just not trying hard enough. Now, on the doorstep of such breakthroughs, is the time for us to talk about taking the world away from its reckless clique of billionaire rapists and putting it under new collective management, where such breakthroughs can truly prosper and give benefit. Because if we don't make our dreams come true, our nightmares surely will.

Telepathy – the Demolished Ego

IN ALFRED K Bester's celebrated 1951 sci-fi novel *The Demolished Man* the antihero plans a murder and, knowing he will be a suspect and fearing interrogation by the telepathic police, commissions a jingle writer to create a musical 'earworm' so compulsive that the police interrogators will not be able to 'see' past it into his deeper thoughts. Now, it seems, the first tentative step towards such telepathic intrusion has been taken.

The final frontier is not space, it is the wall between neurology and psychology, the physical brain from the outside and the subjective mind from the inside. MRI scans have shown that different parts of the brain 'light up' when we have different thoughts and feelings, giving researchers clues that there is indeed a correlation between brain geography and function and thus allowing the recent revolution in brain mapping to take place. A new study in North Carolina has gone further, using implants in rats, by reading the signals from one rat brain and communicating them to a second brain, allowing the recipient in effect to 'read' the sender's thoughts. The recipient can then complete a task as directed by the sender's brain, whether the sender is in the next cage or a continent away ('Telepathic animals solve task as one', *New Scientist*, 9 March).

The study reports a success rate of around 60 to 70 percent, placing it well above random chance but considerably short on reliability, and the reason is that the 'reading' is only an aggregate of the local brain region's signals, aimed at the same region in the recipient's brain. Given the crudeness of the procedure it is surprising that it works at all, so the success rate is actually remarkable. If it ever becomes possible to map the signal of each individual neuron and aim it at an equivalent target neuron, accuracy could theoretically jump to near 100 percent. An analogy that may occur to some readers is the first wide-frequency Marconi blast across the Atlantic that heralded the beginnings of radio.

Were we now living in a peaceful, creative society of socialist common ownership, such news would doubtless excite interest and debate among the informed and engaged population. As it is, forced to endure the heartless world of money slavery and ruthless competition at every level among a misinformed, alienated and paranoid population, debate can only take a darker form.

Mali clarification

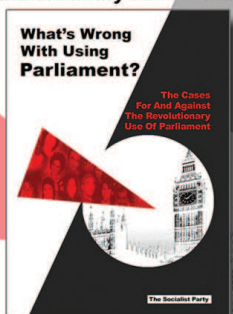
We have received two emails about the article on Mali in last month's issue. One said that it gave the impression of approving the French intervention and asked if this was the Socialist Party's position or just that of the writer. The other criticised the article for 'giving theocratic reasons for a materialistic event, a war, indeed denying there are any material causes' adding that 'the statement that there is no oil in Mali is simply untrue'.

Reply:

The Socialist Party does not support armed intervention by any capitalist state. The article was essentially informative and descriptive and the author simply recorded that most Malians seem to approve of the intervention. This was a factual statement, not an expression of support.

Regarding the reasons for the intervention, the key thing is that the internal conflict in Mali isn't a simply mechanistic one over economic resources. While there is oil it would probably cost more to get it out of the ground than it can be sold for, like a lot of oil, and hence why none of the major capitalist powers have shown a developed interest in it despite colonisation in the 19th century. That was the point the author was trying to make. A bigger factor was probably elements in the North hostile to the general interests of the Western capitalist powers controlling the area and who wanted to impose sharia law. In short, although we don't think the conflict is mainly about narrow economic issues there are, of course, material factors in the background explaining why factions in the country have developed the way they have, as was explained in the article – *Editors*

New Socialist Party Pamphlet What's Wrong With Using Parliament? The Cases For And Against The Revolutionary Use Of Parliament



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Forty Years On

The magazine, *New Internationalist*, was first published in March 1973. Since then it has presented a lot of interesting material on global development, inequality, powerlessness and so on, and has found space over the years to include a number of letters from Socialists.

THE FORTIETH anniversary edition published an article from its founding editor Peter Adamson, dealing with what progress there had been over four decades and accompanied by a page of statistics comparing some aspects of society in 1970 and 2010. As he notes, the first issues of the magazine were suffused by 'the spirit of

mere 47, and in sub-Saharan Africa almost one child in eight still dies before their fifth birthday. And want has clearly not been conquered.

Above all, though, it is inequality that has become more severe over time. Measuring this is difficult, but between 1976 and 2010 average income in low-income economies increased proportionally less than that in industrialised countries. Moreover, the share of the richest one per cent of the population is far greater now than back in the 1970s. Adamson suggests that 'progress' be measured by looking at the lives of the lowest quintile in a country (the poorest 20 per cent, also known as Q1).

So despite the



times...

overwhelmingly one of optimism'.

Living standards in the UK were rising, abortion had been legalised and homosexuality decriminalised. Furthermore, many former colonies had become independent, and 'we expected the war on want to be won.'

Over the forty years surveyed, there were many changes for the better. Life expectancy had increased from 56 to 70 globally, and from 43 to 59 in the least developed countries. Mortality rates for under-fives had decreased from 139 per thousand live births globally in 1970 to 57 in 2010; in the least developed countries, the reduction had been from 240 to 110; and in the industrialised countries from 24 to just six per thousand.

Adamson notes that 'a great leap forward has been made towards meeting basic human needs,' yet 'the very poorest have often been excluded from the great gains that have been made.' Thus in Sierra Leone, life expectancy had gone up from 34 to a

valiant efforts of many sincere and committed people, global inequalities of wealth and power remain major problems. This is without mentioning the onslaught on the environment or the destruction caused by war. Our solution: not to improve the lives of Q1 but create a world where such notions are meaningless, where everyone shares in the wealth produced co-operatively and has equal control over their lives. This cannot be done overnight, but in a Socialist world it could be achieved very quickly.

PB



Sins of the Fathers

FIRST THERE were the black and white smoke signals from the Vatican; then a bloke in a posh frock on the balcony announced in Latin (because these things have to be communicated in ways otherwise unused in the modern world) 'Habemus papam' which, roughly translated, means 'We've got a new one.' And out stepped the new Pope and asked the crowd of nuns and tourists, all weeping with joy because they'd got a new one, to pray for him.

He'll need more than prayers to deal with all the stories of abuse, blackmail, bullying, gay rent boys and other dirty deeds in the Vatican, and in the Catholic Church generally, that beset the previous Pope's last days in the job.

After deflecting the world's attention from the widespread abuse of children in the Church, his job will be to deliberate on God's latest thoughts on such things as abortion, celibacy, sin, sex, sodomy and contraception (or, when involving the priesthood, any combination of these).

But while the cardinals were still weighing each other up for the job, an organisation named SNAP (Survivors Network of Abuse by Priests) had come up with a list of a 'Dirty Dozen' candidates who, they say, because of their failure to deal with the problem, should not become Pope, or even be involved in the selection process. Their website (www.snapnetwork.org) makes interesting reading.

The new Pope Francis was not on the list. But one who was got singled out for his 'complete and utter failure' to act against paedophile priests, allowing them to 'act like wolves in a flock of sheep.' And in a legal case, the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to a \$10 million pay-out to settle four cases of sexual abuse by a former priest. But 'as part of this settlement, no parties admit any wrongdoing,' reported the BBC news website. Perhaps those concerned will go to confession to get it off their chests.

SNAP points out that although most of the abuse allegations and revelations have so far come from Europe and America, where the media and investigative systems are fairly robust, Africa and Asia also have huge Catholic populations. It doesn't help, they say, that one of the cardinals from Africa claimed: 'We don't have that problem here because we don't have homosexuality.'

How seriously they took SNAP's concerns may be judged by a Vatican spokesman's reply that they were 'well aware' of the accusations, but 'it is not up to advocacy groups to determine who should participate or not in the conclave.'

And it's not only the abuse of minors that diverted attention from the Pope vote. While the sexual preferences and peccadillos of priests that include other consenting adults are, of course, their own business, they can't get away with damning a particular practice as evil and then secretly practicing it themselves, especially when the subjects of their attentions are not the same way inclined.

One archbishop who could always be relied on to thunder out the Church's condemnation on what he saw as immorality was Cardinal Keith O'Brien. His views on such issues as same-sex marriage: 'a grotesque subversion of a universally accepted human right,' on homosexuality: a matter of being 'morally disordered,' on the abortion rate: 'two Dunblane massacres every day,' on the human fertilisation and embryology bill: 'grotesque' and akin to 'Nazi-style experiments,' won him the title of 'Bigot of the Year' from the gay rights charity Stonewall.

But the Cardinal became an ex-Cardinal when news of his unwanted 'sexual misconduct' towards three priests and a former priest hit the headlines. Despite initial denials and reports that he 'contests these claims and is taking legal advice,' within a few days he announced: 'I wish to take this opportunity to admit that there have been times that my sexual conduct has fallen below the standards expected of me as a priest.' Actually, his standards were pretty much what we have come to expect from the Catholic Church. Especially the blatant hypocrisy.

NW



Socialist Standard

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Hoping for profits

SINCE THE current crisis broke out in 2008 some commentators have been prepared to admit that Marx was right about globalisation and even about capitalism being an unstable economic system that swings between booms and slumps. It is rare, though, for them to admit to a conflict of interest between workers and capitalists over the share of the wealth the workers produce. But an article by Chris Dillow in the *Investors Chronicle* (7 March) did.

Dillow wrote that 'high unemployment could see profits grow nicely.' His argument was that 'there are more people out of work than headline figures suggest' and that this 'could force down real wages even further in the next 12 months.' He added gleefully, 'for investors, however, there's an upside to this – lower real wages could mean a rising profit share and hence decent profit growth even if the economy grows only slowly.' He explained:

'There's a simple reason for this. In conventional economic terms, an excess supply of labour bids down its price, increasing consumer surplus for its purchasers. Or in Marxian terms, mass unemployment shifts bargaining power from workers to capitalists.'

It certainly does. Since wages are a price (of someone's ability to do a particular job), increased unemployment is a sign that the supply of this commodity has exceeded the demand for it. In accordance with the law of supply and demand, and despite trade union resistance, its price will tend to fall and with it the workers' standard of living.

As investors like to think that investing in the stock exchange is a science, Dillow provided a more detailed prediction for them:

'History suggests this usually happens. Since the data on economic inactivity began in 1993, there has been a good correlation (0.51) between a wide measure of unemployment – the unemployed plus 'inactive' who want a job as a percentage of the working age population – and the non-oil profit share four quarters later. High rates of joblessness, such as in the early 1990s, led to high profit shares. And lower rates, in the mid-2000s, led to lower profit shares.'

We don't know that the link between unemployment and the share of profits in GDP is that precise, but there clearly is one. Lower real wages (what they will buy) do not necessarily mean higher real profits, since in a slump GDP falls (that's what a slump is). So, both real wages and real profits can fall at the same time. Which is what does happen at the start of a slump. Eventually, however, the lower wages will be one of the factors helping to restore profitability, a necessary condition for any recovery.

Dillow concluded: 'I suspect this year might be a better one for corporate profits than for workers.' This is based on assuming that GDP will grow in 2013. In which case, with lowered wages, both real profits and profits share would increase. But he could be wrong. There could be a triple dip or a flat-line in 2013. If this happens, then 2013 would be a bad year for profits as well as wages. But, either way, it is going to be a bad year for workers.

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Mexican drug wars

IN THE late 19th and early 20th century opium was imported into Mexico, mainly by Chinese immigrants. But by the 1920s and 1930s Mexicans were growing the poppies. Opium, cocaine, heroin and marijuana crossed the border into the United States with relative ease. With the outlawing of narcotics in the US, exporting became a very profitable line of business for those prepared to take the risks.

During the Cold War, a number of top officials of the Dirección Federal de Seguridad (DFS) were involved, together with elements of the CIA and the World Anti-Communist League (WACL), in trafficking drugs into the United States. This apparently continued for at least 40 years.

Nevertheless, the Mexican army was used as part of a national campaign to eradicate the drug trade, and the growing of poppies. Much of this was ineffectual as growers bribed officials to leave their crops alone. In some states, such as Guerrero, the army was involved in armed conflict with local peasants. Indeed, when I was in Guerrero in 1979, travelling in a bus between Acapulco and Monelos, we were stopped by a unit of the army and forced to get out. In fact, the army was as much, if not more, concerned with combating 'subversives' as drug traffickers.

In *Drug War Mexico: Politics, Neoliberalism and Violence in the New Narcoeconomy* (Zed books, 2012) Peter Watt and Roberto Zepeda detail what, in 1976, was called Operation Condor, which involved the aerial spraying of opium fields with such chemicals as paraquat. It was a partial success. For a while the volume of drugs entering the United States was halved. But the demand for drugs in the US was, and still is, insatiable.

The Mexican state and drug traffickers have had, as the authors note, 'a long history of collaboration, and it was generally state actors who supervised the entire business.' This increased in the 1980s. Interestingly, the actual consumption of drugs including marijuana is and was lower in Mexico than in other Latin American countries and insignificant compared with the United States.

Since the 1980s, however, the poverty of the working class has exacerbated and perpetuated both drug production in Mexico and export to the US. According to Watt and Zepeda:

'The prevalence of drug production, combined with economic reforms that essentially excluded much of the rural workforce from legitimate commercial activity, meant that it was very difficult to create suitable alternatives within the formal economy.'

By the mid-1980s Colombian drug cartels joined Mexican traffickers in establishing smuggling operations into the United States.

The election of Vicente Fox to the Mexican presidency in 2000, brought with it massive opportunities for the increasing and expanding of business by the narcotraffickers. And it allowed Joaquín El Chapo Guzmán Fuentes, the *Capo* of the Sinaloa cartel, to become the world's most powerful and richest trafficker. 'Perhaps the most significant change in narcotrafficking as the new millennium began,' say Watt and Zepeda, 'was the cartels now started to treat members of the army, police forces, bankers and political officials as their employees,' a reversal of the old arrangement. The development of a limited, bourgeois democracy in Mexico from the old authoritarian regime actually increased the power of the wealth of the narcotraffickers! As a result, Mexicans now live in a society characterised by ever-rising crime and insecurity.

The authors of *Drug War Mexico* note that although narcotics have been prevalent in Mexico since the 19th century, the level of illicit drug production and trafficking has now reached unprecedented proportions. For example, 90 per cent of all cocaine consumed in the US is trafficked through Mexico.

Many towns and cities in Mexico are suffering from organised crime. The exact number of deaths related to drug cartel violence is not known. Between 2006 and 2011 it was officially estimated at 39,000. More than 5,000 persons were reported as missing or disappeared, and 9,000 corpses have yet to be identified. My guess is that up to 100,000 Mexicans have died since 2005. More than 500,000 Mexicans are now directly or indirectly involved or employed in organised crime related to drugs. According to Juan Ramón la Fuente in *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica* (2009), 'We are confronted by a brutal and very sophisticated force, which has submarines, helicopters, airplanes, and sophisticated weaponry.' The anti-drugs activities and efforts of both the Mexican and United States authorities have had little effect to date; although the Mexican army appears to have had more success in combating the so-called Zapatista uprising in Chiapas (the Zapatistas oppose the consumption of both narcotics and alcohol).

Is there a solution or solutions to Mexico's drug wars, violence and killings, or the trade in drugs? Watt and Zepeda see some hope in legislation and in pressure groups – but not much. The brutal facts are that, within capitalism, in Mexico, the United States and globally, the commodification of drugs will continue as long as there are big profits to be made from their production, sale and trafficking.

PETER E. NEWELL



Part of the proceeds
of a drug bust, 2007



Calamity... Calamity

TV debates during the 2010 general election. It sounded pretty good – a politician who could be trusted to do as he said he would. Except that it must also have started a lot of unconvinced voters asking some questions. Like – ‘No More Broken Promises’? So had there been some in the past? When? Why? How many? What about? Who made them? Who broke them? And what was Clegg and his party offering to make us trust them now?’ Like when he was saying about Brown and Cameron that as they attacked each other ‘...the more they sound the same...I know many of you think that all politicians are just the same. I hope I’ve tried to show you that that just isn’t true’.

Huhne

Well, we had some help in dealing with this last point last month, when two recently prominent providers of media-satisfying scandal in Clegg’s party were sent to prison, each for eight months, for the offence of perverting the course of justice. There was Chris Huhne, until recently the Minister for Energy and MP for the Hampshire constituency of Eastleigh. And there was Vicky Pryce, who was his wife until their divorce. This distinguished couple were in court because in 2003 Chris Huhne, when he was an MEP travelling from Stansted Airport to his home, was clocked driving along a motorway above the speed limit, an offence for which his driving licence would be endorsed with three penalty points, leading to him being banned from driving. This happens to a lot of drivers but Huhne’s problem was that his motoring performances (Pryce talked about him ‘driving like a maniac’) would undermine his ambition eventually to get into the House of Commons. At his request Pryce agreed to sign the necessary form stating that she had been behind the wheel at the time.

The affair might have continued in this way, tense as it must have been for the participants, if the press had not heard rumours that Huhne was having an affair with Carina Trimingham, who had been his press officer. Huhne decided he would be wise to tell Pryce about this, adding that he was leaving her that very day – and then dashing off to claim his place at the gym. In the circumstances it was hardly surprising that Pryce should look for revenge and approach the press about her taking Huhne’s speeding points. The rest, as they say, is history, except that in this case it is a history flavoured by some disturbing events relevant to Huhne and his drive to get to the top and to Clegg’s ravings about keeping promises.

Affair

Huhne had emerged into public attention in 2006 when he stood for election to the LibDem leadership in succession to Charles Kennedy, who had resigned because of his drink problem. The victor in that contest was Menzies Campbell, but he could not present the youthfully



Huhne



Pryce

vigorous image the party felt it needed so a year later he also resigned and the way was open for a contest between Clegg and Huhne. The campaign got lively with a complaint from Clegg about a press release from Huhne which, after listing some criticisms of him, dubbed him “Calamity Clegg”. Huhne responded that although he agreed with the content of the piece, he did not approve of the title which was the work of some ‘over zealous young researcher’. In fact the author of the offending phrase was Huhne’s future partner Carina Trimingham.

Clegg won by 511 votes but there were 1300 votes which went astray in the post and which, when checked later, would probably have given victory to Huhne. In spite of such passing matters Huhne’s background as a money-

making operator in the City (he is a multi-millionaire) and his triumph in the 2010 general election at Eastleigh, where he increased the LibDem majority from 568 to 3864, made him a clear case for promotion. During his election campaign he successfully contained the affair with Trimingham, preferring to use the image of a devoted father of three, with photographs to prove it: ‘Family matters to me so much – where would we be without them?’ one of his

leaflets told the local voters.

Later, in charge as Minister of Energy and Climate Change in the coalition government (reckoned to be the tenth most powerful in the Cabinet) Huhne managed to modify his former opinion that nuclear energy was a system which was ‘tried, tested and failed’ and instead argued that there were ‘issues’ (a favourite word for anyone trying to avoid an uncomfortable reality) ‘outside of the realm of nuclear safety, particularly that of the economics of it and the costs in capital to the nuclear operator.’

Pryce

And in all this, where does Vicky Pryce stand? There has been a lot of sympathy for her: an article in the *Sunday Times* said she is ‘...for all her career success and steely public face ...a surprisingly fragile soul...’ Which about covers the fact that to protect her then husband’s rocky standing she engaged in a conspiracy to condone his potential for driving dangerously. As she well knew, and as we saw in the scandals of David Laws, Lord Rennard and others, such tactics are commonly used in capitalism’s political jungles. Apart from that, Pryce is an economist, generously qualified and widely regarded for her readiness to grapple – no more effectively than the others – with capitalism’s tsunamis of crises. To some she is, as an economist, not able to claim to be entirely free of all responsibility over the present chaos. Which serves as another exposure of Clegg’s clamorous assertion that the LibDems are better – more reliable and honest – than the others. And along with this the system grinds on, with its wars, poverty, disease, misery...Calamity Clegg if you like. Calamity Capitalism is more to the point.

IVAN

Hugo Chavez:

'21st Century Socialist' or Populist Strongman?



The formula 'socialism of the 21st century' encapsulates the hopes that many leftists throughout the world placed in President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and his so-called 'Bolivarian Revolution' or 'Bolivarian Process.' ('Bolivarian' refers to Simon Bolivar, commander of the army that defeated the Spaniards in 1821 and won independence for Venezuela and other Spanish colonies in the north-western part of South America.)

The term '21st century socialism' was coined by Mexican sociologist Heinz Dieterich Steffan, who served as an adviser to Chavez for several years but fell out with him in 2011. It conveys the idea that Venezuela is pioneering a new and exciting 'socialism' for the new century,

based on grassroots participation, in contrast to the stodgy bureaucratic 'socialism' (what we call state capitalism) of the 20th century.

Defying the Yanquis

The regime established by Chavez in Venezuela over his 14 years in office also has appeal as a less tarnished substitute for Castro's Cuba. Chavez was a charismatic leader with much of the flamboyance of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro – and the same penchant for making speeches of inordinate length. His speeches, like theirs, thundered defiance of the Yanqui tyrants to the north. Unlike Castro, however, Chavez won office by electoral means (after an earlier attempt to seize power in a military coup failed). Nor did he have the

embarrassing habit of imprisoning his domestic critics.

Given the long history of US domination and aggression in Latin America, the continuing appeal of anti-US rhetoric is understandable. Nevertheless, in the 21st century it is rather out of date. US hegemony over the Americas has already given way to a new and more complex structure of capitalist competition. The US remains actively involved in this new game, but the players also include rising regional powers like Brazil – and Venezuela itself – and Eurasian powers like China and Japan. Pretending to refight old battles is a way of obscuring the new reality.

The social missions

This is not to deny that Chavez's

appeal derived partly from his achievement of real social reforms. Venezuela is a major oil exporter and the oil industry has been nationalised since 1975. Chavez was able to devote a part of state oil revenue to social programmes. Funds were allocated mainly to a series of 'social missions' that were established in 2003 in order to improve healthcare, education, housing and nutrition in the barrios (shanty towns) surrounding Caracas and other cities.

Observers take different views of the impact of these social programs. The account by German Sanchez, Cuban ambassador to Venezuela, is peppered with superlatives like 'tremendous' and 'magnificent' (*Cuba and Venezuela: An Insight Into Two Revolutions*, Ocean Press 2007, Ch. 4). The Venezuelan anarchist Rafael Uzcategui talks more about the limitations of the programs. For example, slum dwellers now have easier access to treatment for relatively minor ailments at neighbourhood clinics staffed by Cuban and Venezuelan physicians. But when they fall seriously ill they still have to rely on public hospitals that remain overcrowded and underfunded. Housing standards are still grossly inadequate (*Venezuela: Revolution as Spectacle*, See Sharp Press 2010).

Uzcategui also points out that many poor people, especially in Venezuela's vast interior, have received no benefits from the missions and that spending on social programs has been dwarfed by military expenditure, including costly arms imports.

Clearly there has been a modest but significant improvement in the

material conditions of ordinary people under Chavez. According to official statistics, in the course of the 2000s the proportion of the population in 'extreme poverty' fell from 23 percent to 9 percent and the unemployment rate from 15 percent to 8 percent. Real wages rose on average by 1 percent per year against a background of rapid inflation.

Trotsky, Mao, Marx, Jesus, Bolivar

Chavez defined his political credo in different ways at different times. Soon after being sworn in as president he declared that he was a Trotskyist. When he visited China in 2008 he assured his hosts that he was a Maoist. In a speech to the national assembly in 2009, he explained: 'I am a Marxist to the same degree as the followers of the ideas of Jesus Christ and the liberator of America, Simon Bolivar' – in other words, in an extremely loose sense.

The longest-lasting influence on Chavez was undoubtedly the legacy of his hero and model, Bolivar, remembered as a social reformer as well as a fighter for

“The real policy of the Chavez regime regarding social movements was a mixture of co-optation, surveillance and repression”

national independence. He also enthusiastically admired the Castro regime in Cuba, denying that it was a dictatorship. On a visit to Cuba in 1999 he declared: 'Venezuela is travelling toward the same sea as the Cuban people – a sea of happiness, real social justice and peace.' It is therefore very difficult to argue on the basis of Chavez' public statements that he really had a vision of socialism radically different from twentieth-century state capitalism.

Deals with capitalists

Despite all his talk about revolution and socialism, Chavez' relations with capitalists at home and abroad were by no means wholly confrontational. The most that can be said is that he was in conflict with some capitalists some of the time.

In particular, telecommunications magnate Gustavo Cisneros, whose fortune is estimated at \$6 billion, was initially hostile to Chavez. Observers suspect that Cisneros was behind the failed coup of April 2002. Then in June 2004 the two men met. It is not known what was said at this meeting, but they seem to have come to a deal. Commentators on Cisneros' television station Venevision suddenly switched from an anti-Chavez to a pro-Chavez line. Presumably in exchange, Chavez refused to renew the broadcasting license of Cisneros' main competitor, in effect granting his new ally a monopoly.

Chavez never tried to keep out foreign companies. In March 2009 McDonalds had 135 outlets in Venezuela and was selling more fast food there than in any other country of the region.

Chavez posed as a defender of Venezuela's natural resources



Far left: Simon Bolivar, commander of the army that defeated the Spaniards in 1821. Left: Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata.

against the machinations of greedy foreign corporations. In reality, he concluded agreements with Chevron, BP and the Spanish oil company Repsol. He also pushed through legal and constitutional changes that may open the door to the gradual reprivatization of Petroleos de Venezuela, the state oil company. It is now possible to establish mixed state-private enterprises with up to 49 percent foreign ownership for the development of new oil and gas deposits.

'Petroleum socialism'

Chavez was committed to continued reliance on hydrocarbon exports

– indeed, so deeply committed that he christened this model of capitalist development ‘petroleum socialism!’ Venezuelan leftists had never been fond of ‘the devil’s excrement’ and were especially concerned with the social and environmental consequences of an oil-based economy, but they stopped expressing these concerns after Chavez came to power. A documentary on the oil industry by Italian film-maker Gabriel Muzio (*Our Oil and Other Tales*), though sponsored by government agencies, was suppressed when they learned that Muzio had focused on these issues.

Besides oil and gas, there are also plans for a large-scale expansion of coal mining in Zulia State. Before these plans can be implemented, however, the Venezuelan government will have to overcome stiff resistance from environmental groups and local indigenous communities trying to defend their homes against the steamroller of endless capital accumulation.

In a world divided into competing states, of course, the government of any country – however ‘socialist’ it may claim to be – is naturally going to be highly reluctant to renounce the potential financial gain from selling its country’s natural resources. Only collective action at the global level can establish the fundamentally new society that we call socialism.

Comandante-presidente

The priority that the armed forces enjoy in the allocation of state funds has already been mentioned. This is not the only militaristic aspect of the ‘Bolivarian’ regime.

Chavez appointed hundreds of military men to state posts, including some notorious for their abuses. For instance, Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Luis Reyes Reyes, as governor of Lara State from 2000 to 2008, oversaw the formation of police death squads that carried out five massacres of civilians. In 2008 Reyes Reyes was recalled to Caracas and promoted to ministerial level.

According to records kept by the Committee of Victims Against Impunity, ‘the police have committed more murders during the so-called Bolivarian Process than during the presidencies of Betancourt and Leoni, whose regimes are remembered as the most repressive of the Fourth Republic’ (Uzcategui, p. 198).

Chavez began his career as an army officer and at heart that is what he remained. He made constant use of military expressions in civilian contexts – for instance, calling

election campaign groups ‘Units of Electoral Battle’. He liked the title of ‘commander president’ (comandante-presidente) and frankly sought to monopolise power. Appealing in 2001 on the radio to his supporters to form ‘Bolivarian circles’ in various walks of life, he saw fit to remind them: ‘Remember that I’m going to start giving instructions as the leader’ (Uzcategui, p. 173).

Thus, there are good reasons to question not only Chavez’ credentials as a socialist (of any century) but even his attachment to democratic principles. He bore a strong resemblance to the traditional Latin American image of the charismatic populist strongman or caudillo. In Venezuela this image is rooted in the



Recuerdos de Chavez

foundational myth of Simon Bolivar. It is also embodied in a long line of popular heroes who adorn the history of Latin America, from the Mexican revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata to Argentina’s Juan Peron.

Popular power?

And yet many people have been impressed by the appearance of extensive popular participation under Chavez – surely the diametrical opposite of a personal dictatorship. How can these things be reconciled?

The public scene in Venezuela does indeed abound in active social movements – trade unions, cooperatives, neighbourhood groups, campaigns for human rights, environmental organizations and many others. An upsurge in grassroots activity did coincide with the rise of Chavez and the consolidation of his power, but that leaves open the question of the relationship between the two

processes.

In rhetorical and symbolic terms, Chavez always *appeared* sympathetic to popular participation. This helped him build and maintain his support base and get elected president.

An example of participatory symbolism was the insertion of the phrase ‘of popular power’ into the names of government ministries. Thus, the Ministry of Education became the ‘Ministry of Popular Power for Education’ (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educacion). This, of course, did nothing to make ministries less bureaucratic or more participatory.

Co-optation, surveillance, repression

The real policy of the Chavez regime regarding social movements was a mixture of co-optation, surveillance and repression. Efforts were made to incorporate grassroots activists into official structures such as the community councils. Those who allowed themselves to be incorporated lost their autonomy and came under the control of the state bureaucracy. Those who resisted co-optation, smeared as supporters of the ‘fascist’ right-wing opposition, were harassed and intimidated by vigilante groups trained, armed and funded by the state. These groups also collected ‘social intelligence’ about workers, homeless people, street vendors and other social sectors with a proclivity to generate conflict’ (Uzcategui, p. 202). Finally, increasing use was made of the police and army to suppress protests and demonstrations.

The ‘Bolivarian’ leaders who succeed Chavez, lacking his popular charisma, may well resort to even greater use of repression. We hope that the demise of the hero will awaken leftists outside Venezuela from their trance and enable them to take a more critical and realistic view of the situation in that country.

There is no need to deny that in all likelihood Hugo Chavez was motivated by the best of intentions, or that worthwhile social reforms were achieved under his presidency. Nevertheless, like all other mortals, Chavez was susceptible to the corruption of power. That is one of the reasons why even the most benevolent tyranny cannot lead to a free classless society. The emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself.

STEFAN



Adulterating food for profit isn't a new story. *The old testament* first alerted its readers to it with the shrill warning that there is, 'death in the pot!' (II Kings ch.4, verse 40). At the turn of the twentieth century *The New York Evening Post* even penned an ode to it:

Mary had a little lamb,
And when she saw it sicken,
She shipped it off to Packingtown,
And now it's labelled chicken.

David Cameron revealed his thoughts on the subject when he stated that it was

Sainsbury's
Try something new today
Go somewhere else

a 'very shocking story, it's completely unacceptable. . . people will be very angry to find out they have been eating horse when they thought they were eating beef.' So will those that sold it to them—the supermarkets. They've been caught out at their own game by their suppliers: horsemeat costs £300 per ton and beef £700 per ton.

'*Every little helps*' chirps the Tesco slogan, and your helpful cash brings in around £3+ billion in pre-tax profits per year for Tesco from a market share of 30 per cent. About £1 in every £10 spent in British shops ends up in Tesco's tills. Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons share a further 47 per cent of the total market. With the UK grocery market worth more than £163 billion, the big four are engaged in a constant battle to out manoeuvre each other for a juicier

helping of the profit pie.

Sainsbury's ask you to '*try something new today*'. That's not too difficult given that almost 80 per cent of the food sold in supermarkets today didn't exist 15 years ago. The majority of these new items are packaged junk food distinguished by their significant lack of nutrients thanks to the pioneering work of the food processors. Like many modern technologies, food processing was developed over the past two centuries to serve military needs: junk food is the lucrative spin-off. People didn't suddenly demand spicy burgers or chicken nibbles. The market was created because cheap raw materials could be converted into much more expensive, and thus extremely profitable, items to be sold through supermarkets and other retail outlets. Fresh food has its pecuniary advantages too. Researcher Tania Hurt-



Newton revealed that the income derived from pineapples was shared out in these ratios: 4 per cent was earned by the workers; the plantation owners pocketed 17 per cent; 38 per cent went to the multi-national traders; and the supermarkets scalped 41 per cent. A survey conducted by the NFU in 2002 discovered that a basket of food (eggs, milk, bread, tomatoes, beef, and apples) costing £37 in the supermarket returned just £11 to the farmers. Today it is less.

Morrison's slogan, '*More of what matters*', will obviously include what in America is called 'pink slime', and in the UK the food industry calls 'filler'. Pink slime is the scraps left after butchering that has been cleaned with ammonia. In 2012, *ABC News* claimed that of the ground beef sold in American supermarkets around 70 per cent was composed of pink

slime. Filler is fat and collagen; derived from the ligaments and tendons of butchered carcasses. This is what bulks out mince meat. New EU rules want to limit this to 19 per cent fat and collagen.

But *The Telegraph* (3 February) revealed

that, 'Supermarkets will be able to sell minced meat containing more than 50 per cent "filler" under Government plans to avoid EU limits'. Similarly, the pressure by supermarkets to force down suppliers' prices has driven manufacturers to concoct ever cheaper ingredients. Thus the *BBC* (28 February) can report that European meat suppliers are: 'using a loophole in the law to sell a banned low quality material to UK sausage makers. Called desinewed meat . . . it's retrieved from animal bones using low pressure water. Visually it is said to be similar to a fine mince, and closer to meat than the more liquid 'mechanically separated meat' (MSM) 'slurry'.

US poultry meat and cattle exports reached almost \$10 billion in 2011, and a total of 33.5 million head of cattle were slaughtered. A few novel ingredients were added to boost profits: around 80 per cent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. are gobbled up by factory farming. Cows, poultry, fish and pigs are routinely dosed up by U.S producers. In 1946 the food industry discovered that using antibiotics in livestock feed increased their growth by as much as 3 per cent. It also allowed livestock to be incarcerated in overcrowded and filthy conditions that under other circumstances would have spawned rates of disease and death that would have made it entirely unprofitable. The US Food and Drug Administration has finally acknowledged it as a, 'mounting public health problem of global significance' (*inthesetimes.com*). And a New England Journal of Medicine study found that '20 per cent of ground meat obtained in supermarkets contained salmonella. Of that 20 per cent contaminated with salmonella, 84 per cent was resistant to at least one form of antibiotic' (*pbs.org*).

Asda's slogan asks: 'Why pay more?'

And why should they? The National Beef Association recently accused supermarkets of 'short-sighted, price-led, purchasing tactics and a bullying culture.' When you control around 86 per cent of the market you can use that buying power to put tremendous pressures on suppliers to deliver goods to you at extremely low prices under terms and agreements dictated by your monopoly of the market. Unsurprisingly, those pressures are then exerted downwards on those that actually grow, pick, pack and deliver the food through low wages, long hours, and piss-poor conditions of work.

The Telegraph (27 April 2008) disclosed one of the many tactics used by supermarkets, coined *The Flaming Lamborghini*. 'Supermarkets ship in young, hungry graduates in their mid-20s. They send them to be trained to learn a particular buying strategy and then send them out to do battle with the suppliers. Pay is linked to performance. Squeeze another half penny out of the supplier and the buyer's pay will rise. . . Buyers' lives are often short-lived and they are shuttled from pet food to beer to toiletries. The goal is to ensure they never build up close relationships which might tempt them to treat suppliers more kindly.

The Co-operative Group stands at number five in food retailing controlling 9 per cent of the UK market. Its slogan is: '*Good with food*'. The question is: good for whom? Beginning with inputs like seeds, to fertilisers and agricultural machinery, to the processing, transportation, and finally the retailing of food, each area is now dominated by a handful of extremely powerful multinational corporations. Over the past 20 years, through a series of deals and corporate takeovers, names like Monsanto, Syngenta, Unilever, Diageo, Nestle, Kellogg's, through to Sainsbury's, Asda and Tesco have gained control of their respective market sectors, thereby escalating their profits to once unthought-of levels. This process is the embodiment of capitalism. Dynamic—fully tuned and optimised—generating a brimming pot for division amongst a faceless class of parasites.

David Cameron considered that the horsemeat saga was a 'very shocking story'. A so-called 'fraud' in a global system built and maintained on fraud. Here's another story: UNESCO acknowledges that there is 'Abundant supplies of food for 100 per cent of humanity'. But over 16 million people are dying from starvation and 800 million are seriously malnourished, whilst billions live a hand to mouth existence - and all too often very little making it to the mouth. This 'other' story will continue to run until a majority of us adopt the slogan: *One World—One People*. Only then will we gain control of what we produce.

ANDY MATTHEWS

AUTHENTICITY

In these strange days of postmodernism, is the concept of authenticity a relevant or helpful idea? In politics, the implicit ideas all have a history that explains both context and evolution. In the tracing of this history a starting point is helpful. Can we call this point authentic or must it always be arbitrary? Certainly any subsequent variation or evolution can only be judged in the light of that original. What might be important is to have evidence that any variation will possibly violate the original concept. Sometimes the source is indisputable (living people or extant texts) but original sources can also be interpretations of other people's work, as with Socrates, Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, etc. Analysis of the content and internal logic of the idea itself is important since the author(s) may not be completely aware of the consequences of their own interpretation. It is entirely possible that the use of the same analysis might contradict the conclusions of the author. So we have three criteria by which to define the authenticity of an idea: Source, Idea and Evolution. I will attempt an analysis of Socialism using these criteria with special reference to the work of Karl Marx.

Socialism has a long history; some say it is as old as humanity. Many pre-historical hunter-gatherer communities seem to have been based on elements of socialism/communism. Traditionally the modern concept of socialism has its roots in the work of Winstanley, Fourier and Saint-Simon. Known as socialist Idealists or Utopian Socialists their primary concern was the immorality of private property and the social injustice that it created. It was not until Karl Marx and Frederick Engels worked together and then with the First International that a comprehensive definition of socialism was attempted.

Marx had claimed, or more precisely others had claimed on his behalf, to have discovered the laws of both historical evolution and capital accumulation. He used the form of analysis known as dialectics which had been developed by the German philosopher Hegel. Building on the theories of the British economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo he produced the paradigm of classical economics in his work *Das Kapital*. It might be claimed that this represented the crystallisation of three traditions: German philosophical Idealism, British economics and French Idealistic socialism. A truly international synthesis befitting the context of the world's First International Workingman's Association.

As a result, and in the light of, all this analysis – economic, historical and philosophical did a definition of socialism arise? 'The common ownership and democratic control of the means of production' is, for me, the authentic expression of what socialism is. Twentieth-century history would argue and reinterpret two key words in this definition out of all recognition – 'common' and 'democratic'. In what is sometimes called 'the century of ideology' we are told that fascism and Soviet 'communism' were somehow connected to, or even resulted from, the definition and ideology of socialism. My contention is that this view is profoundly mistaken because, in part, it completely neglects the importance of

authenticity in the creation of the concept of socialism. As to why this happened, and still happens, is only explainable in terms of 'political consciousness.'

Socialist consciousness is not purely the result of intellectual study. It also demands a psychological reassessment of values and paradigms. What has been called 'false consciousness' is caused primarily not because of a lack of intelligence but by the inability to imagine profound political alternatives. This in turn is mostly due to a political/historical context. If you do not truly understand capitalism then you can never imagine its antithesis – socialism. When the left substituted 'state ownership' for the original 'common ownership' it was because of this. For Marx state ownership could only ever be a prelude to the revolution and was never considered as a form of socialism.

The bourgeois mind could never imagine a stateless, moneyless society – state capitalism was their political limit (Lenin, Mao, Castro etc.). The same is true of their interpretation of democracy. Representative (bourgeois) democracy was replaced by something infinitely worse – centralised democracy or the rule of the elite. Socialism is democracy – the direct control of the means of production by the majority.

So in both respects we can state that this was not an 'evolution' of the idea of socialism but a 'perversion' of it. And we know this, in part, by reference to the 'original' definition based on the 'authentic' origins already discussed. There is also the critique that these leftist definitions are not authentic in terms of the original motivation for socialism – social justice and the freedoms this implies. The terrors of the Soviet Union were no surprise to those with authentic consciousness. In conclusion we can say that in terms of the source (Marx), idea and evolution that the leftist version of socialism is invalid by reference to authenticity (and, of course, political history).

Some time ago I was engaged in a debate on Facebook about the definition of socialism. My opponent contended that my definition was too narrow and what's more it did not coincide with the one given in Wikipedia! Apart from an affront to my ego (thirty years of study and activism) I was saddened by the apparent triumph of the leftist version. But I remind myself that any quest for social justice will always lead to socialist conclusions and it is up to socialists to convert this desperate need into revolutionary action based on authentic motivation and consciousness.

Once this is achieved in the majority no political elite can arise with the potential to corrupt the cause. In this, political consciousness is not dissimilar to the arts – once understood a great painting, novel, film or piece of music will enable you to discern subsequently that which is fake, misleading and superficial (inauthentic). Some time ago the Socialist Party ran 'The Campaign for Real Socialism' in an attempt to revive authentic socialist consciousness. As a lover of the arts from which the name was derived all I can say is: 'I'll have my usual – in a straight glass'.

WEZ

'Surplus Theory'

versus

Marxian Theory

The work of Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick contains some insights for socialists but it is not Marxian economics and is not socialist.

The late twentieth-century saw the demise of many governments that viewed themselves as heirs of the ideas of Karl Marx. The failure of these regimes was seen by their opponents as the triumph of capitalism and the death of socialism. With the rise of neoliberal economics in advanced industrial countries the future of the left did indeed seem bleak. The legacy of Karl Marx and Marxian socialism, however, was far from dead. As the current global recession shook the confidence of neoliberal prescriptions Marx's economic ideas received renewed attention. We examine here the theories of Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff in relation to class, surplus value, their definition of communism and how to achieve it. Richard Wolff in particular has gained much attention in light of the recession through his video *When Capitalism Hits the Fan*.

Reformist road to nowhere

The Socialist Party rejects the minority seizure of power or governing with a programme of reforms with the aim of achieving socialism at some point in the future. We argue that pursuing an objective of seizing power in the name of the working class or of a programme of reforms that aim at removing the worst excesses of capitalism do not move society any further towards socialism. Replacing the immediate objective of socialism with more immediate aims in effect removes

the socialist objective altogether. Others, most others in fact, who have called themselves socialist or communist in the last century and today have rejected this approach. They have argued for the necessity of the seizure of state power by minority parties or, more often, have seen in the reform programmes of labour parties the hope of gradual socialist transformation. The experience of the twentieth century saw the failure of these approaches to transform society on socialist lines. What ensued was the collapse of confidence in the possibility of socialism and indeed in the belief that there was any alternative to capitalism.

If it was assumed that various governments had been or were in fact variants of socialism or communism then it is quite understandable that confidence in that political outlook would either diminish or that a reworking of assumptions would occur, given that the populations of these 'socialist' countries appeared to prefer capitalism. Marxism or 'socialism' could either be discarded or the understanding of them reassessed. Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff are in the latter category and have reworked Marxian economics into 'surplus theory', which attempts to reinterpret Marxian economics in the light of the failure of so-called 'socialist' and 'communist' governments to arrive at their declared communist objective.

To their credit they do not define

the former USSR, China, Cuba, etc. as socialist but as state-capitalist. Likewise they acknowledge that the various attempts to regulate or reform capitalism in the name of socialism resulted in merely more regulated capitalism rather than something different to capitalism. In fact, Wolff and Resnick describe quite nicely the swings, often in response to economic crises, between relatively less or relatively more regulated capitalism in the last century or so. They reject the idea of socialism as it is commonly misunderstood – as state ownership and planned production as against capitalist private ownership and production for the market. At the root of their argument is the understanding that private or state capitalism merely changes the exploiter and does not remove the exploitation. However, their understanding of the root of the exploitation of the working class is at odds with the arguments developed by most Marxian socialists who regard the former USSR and other such regimes as state capitalist.

Russian State capitalism

For us in the Socialist Party capitalism remained intact in the USSR because buying and selling, commodities, value, prices and profit continued. The employers, ceased to be private individuals owning capital and became instead the state, which owned and controlled the large scale means of production and received the surplus value produced. In place

of a narrow elite of private owners of the means of production emerged a narrow social elite who controlled the state. The fundamentally exploitative relationship between capital and labour remained intact with the continued existence of money, wages, commodities, exchange, prices and the growth of a bureaucratic and brutal state. We argue that the disappearance of all of these facets of capitalist society would in fact be necessary before a socialist society could be argued to exist.

For Resnick and Wolff on the other hand capitalism remained intact because the mere legal transfer of private to state property and the shift of power from private capitalists to the state did not produce change at the enterprise level. The workers, the producers of surplus value, they argue, must also become the appropriators of surplus value. Their definition of communism is a society where those who produce the surplus in a given enterprise are the same people who own it and control

a society which transcends wage-labour and money. 'Surplus theory', by contrast, sees no problem with the continuance of money, wages, commodities, exchange, prices and the state. From its perspective, as long as the productive workers obtain the surplus-value of their work and control its distribution then society is communist.

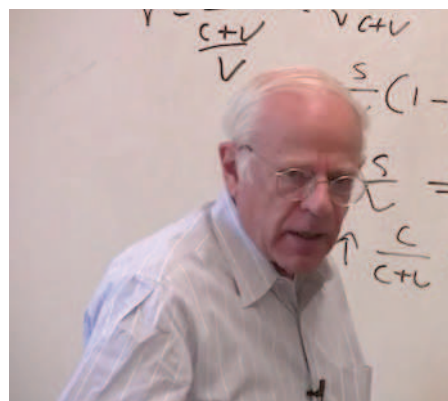
There is a thorny issue for 'surplus theory' to deal with in the relationship between 'productive' and 'unproductive' workers. This is a distinction between those workers in capitalist societies who produce surplus value (e.g. factory workers) and those workers who do not (civil servants, sales staff, security guards, etc.). Of course the one cannot exist without the other and in socialism, according to our definition, there would no longer be such a distinction as there would be no surplus value (although there would be a surplus of goods, of use-values). However, in a socialist society as defined by Resnick and Wolff there would be a

a profit (the realisation of surplus value as money). It is not possible to distinguish the appropriation of surplus from the distribution of it as 'subsumed class payments' since the process is simultaneous and mostly determined behind the backs of those involved as market transactions (although boards do deliberate on how to distribute accumulated surplus value as cash reserves). Capitalism is an anarchic system of social production in which the capitalist class as a whole appropriates surplus value from the working class as a whole and cannot be understood adequately at the level of the individual enterprise.

What is class?

The use of 'surplus theory' can be confusing because it is written in terms familiar to Marxian socialists but with a quite different meaning. When they discuss class, for example, they define it by relationship to surplus value and reject definitions based on power, property or consciousness. For them, your place in capitalism is defined by whether you produce surplus value, derive your wages from surplus value (both working class according to our definition) or whether you appropriate the surplus value and control its distribution (the capitalist class). All processes which do not relate to the direct production of 'surplus value' are classified as 'non-class processes', such as education, culture and even politics. Their philosophical concept of overdetermination (see <http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/education/study-guides/overdetermination-and-marxian-theory-socialist-view-work-richard-wolff-and-st>) comes into play again because class is also argued to be no more important than non-class aspects of society – it is argued that that would be reductionism. By this reasoning if you change the class relationship, if you change the ownership and control of surplus value, other changes (at this point unknowable) will follow as class relates dialectically to all other areas of life.

This is a deliberate attempt to try to keep 'surplus theory' clear of issues of ownership or power. Socialism has failed to date, Resnick and Wolff argue, because socialism has been defined according to who owns the means of production and/or who controls them. This has led to various governments being called socialist because some of the means of production have passed into state ownership and, if enough of the means of production have



Left: Richard Wolff. Above: Stephen Resnick

its distribution. Their argument is the result of the application of their 'surplus theory', which condenses the three volumes of *Capital* into saying that Marx was essentially analysing past and present societies according to who appropriates and distributes the surplus produced in a given society. In this way their 'surplus theory' can be applied to areas like the family, where it is argued that men have historically extracted surplus labour from women in the home.

Conflict over surplus

Whilst Resnick and Wolff promote their analysis as Marxian, it is in fact a simplified departure from classical Marxian ideas that would have Marx turning in his grave. Marx and Engels and many subsequent socialists considered socialism to be

tension between those who produced the surplus value and those that drew from it without contributing to it. They get around this by suggesting job-rotation and other practicable but pointless solutions.

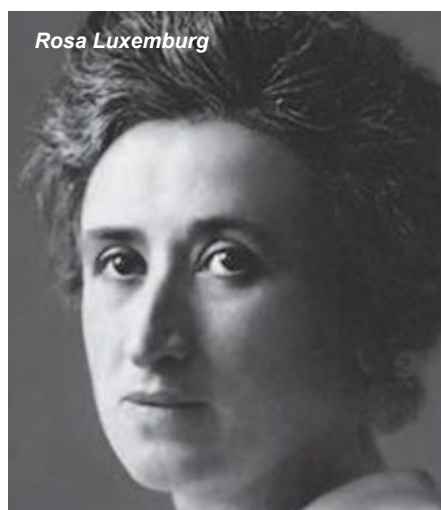
The whole concept of 'surplus theory' is simplistic and misleading. Wolff and Resnick describe a process within capitalism where capitalists appropriate surplus value and then redistribute portions of it in order to reproduce the process. These payments are termed 'subsumed class payments' and include such things as taxes, wages to 'unproductive' employees, rent, interest, advertising, etc. In practice capitalists do not immediately appropriate surplus value but rather the products of the labour of their employees which they hope to sell on the market as commodities at a price that will provide them with

been transferred, a large measure of social and political power is likewise conferred. This leads to their abstruse and obfuscating 'surplus theory' in which 'communism' according to their definition can exist in an economy with state ownership or private ownership and with state planning or markets or a blend of all of these features.

However, capitalism is a system of social production in which private property and the state developed to enable and maintain the expropriation of surplus value via wage-labour. Class (in the classical Marxian sense of the relation of the individual to the means of production) is, of course, not the only or necessarily the most important relation in a given identity or event – it does not determine our lives in any mechanical way. It does, though, suffuse our social experience and shapes and limits our individual and social possibilities. The position of the Socialist Party is at odds with Resnick and Wolff's 'surplus theory.' Socialism, for us, entails a working-class consciousness of the basis of our exploitation and the necessity of political action to gain control of the state as part of a revolutionary process in which common ownership and democratic control of the means of production would replace capitalism, the private or state ownership of the means of production. Our understanding of class involves awareness of the importance not just of the appropriation of surplus value but its mutual dependence on property relations and the state as well as, crucially, the developed political consciousness of the capitalist class and the currently limited political consciousness of the working class.

Worker co-operatives

So, after all their work developing the theories of overdetermination and 'surplus theory' what are the practical solutions offered up by Wolff and Resnick. How are



Rosa Luxemburg

the working class to advance towards a world in which they appropriate and distribute their own surplus? Wolff in particular promotes a strategy to achieve social change around the concept of Workers Self Directed Enterprises (WSDEs). These are, despite Wolff's efforts to argue that they are something new, essentially worker's co-operatives. These, it

is argued, combined with activism to promote democracy and gain political support could be the basis for achieving social transformation. Here we are on familiar and not new ground. Wolff's argument is similar to that of Eduard Bernstein who argued over a century ago that worker's co-operatives were transforming capitalism from within, obviating the need for social revolution. Rosa Luxemburg countered then, as we do now, that workers forming a co-operative "are obliged to take toward themselves the role of capitalist entrepreneur – a contradiction that accounts for the usual failure of production co-operatives which either become pure capitalist enterprises or, if the workers' interests continue to predominate, end by dissolving." To achieve meaningful change through WSDEs would require massive social and political struggle with the end being a form of capitalism in which workers collectively exploit themselves.

COLIN SKELLY



Big fish swallow small fish

INTERVIEWED ON *Desert Island Discs* on BBC Radio 4 on 3 February, Sir Terry Leahy, former chief executive of Tesco, said that 'the death of the high street is progress', adding that 'the loss of some shops was a price worth paying for the lower costs at supermarkets' (*Times*, 4 February).

He would say that, wouldn't he? But the expansion of supermarkets at the expense of small high street shops confirms Marx's view that one of the tendencies of capitalism is the concentration and centralisation of capital.

At the turn of the last century this was challenged by critics of Marx, but the whole of the last century confirmed Marx's contention and it is no longer challenged by bourgeois economists. All sectors of the capitalist economy are now dominated by a handful of firms. Economists have even invented a new word to describe this – 'oligopoly,' or the domination of a market by a few sellers. Food retailing is no exception. In Britain this is dominated by just four supermarkets: Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons.

Marx put it this way:

'The battle of commodities is fought by the cheapening of commodities. The cheapness of commodities depends, all other circumstances remaining the same, on the productivity of labour, and this in turn depends on the scale of production. Therefore the larger capitals beat the smaller.' (*Capital*, Volume 1, chapter 25, section 2)

So, the supermarkets outcompete the smaller high street shops because, being bigger, they can sell more cheaply. Sir Terry is right on this point, but is he right when he says that the closure of many small shops that this results in is 'progress' and a 'price worth paying'? Many disagree, especially the small shop-owners but also, on the political level, the Green Party which specialises in spearheading campaigns against the opening of new supermarkets as this conflicts with their vision of a smaller-scale capitalism.

People, however, have been voting with their feet – or their cars – and deserting the high street shops for the supermarkets. For most, this is an economic necessity, as to make ends meet they have to shop where the prices are lower.

Also, the 'lower costs' that Leahy mentions benefit the capitalist class generally since, in keeping the cost of living lower than it would otherwise be, they also keep down the amount employers must pay in wages to allow their employees to maintain their working skills. In other words, they lower the costs of production generally.

As long as capitalism lasts and by its very nature, supermarkets are going to triumph over high street shops. It is true that some small shops can and do survive by selling better quality goods at a higher price, but these will only ever be patronised by the higher paid. The Green Party will never be able to realise its nostalgic dream of a small-scale, more human capitalism.

Socialists take a different position. In socialism there will be neither supermarkets nor small shops, just distribution stores and centres from which people will be able to take what they need without having to pay. They will all be 'Payless.'



MARY ZIMMERMAN'S 1992 play, *Arabian Nights*, was recently produced at the Tricycle Theatre in London. Zimmerman was motivated by the 1991 Gulf War to dramatise *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* to portray the poetic richness of Islamic and Arabic culture. The stories are Middle Eastern and South Asian folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age (c750-1258 AD) of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad when the Arab world was the intellectual centre of science, philosophy, poetry, commerce and agriculture. The Caliph Harun Al Rashid (Denton Chikura) is even a character in the *Arabian Nights*.

The magical key line of Zimmerman's *Arabian Nights* is 'in our heads, my lord, we do contain all the images of the universe': the play is a celebration of the imagination, the power of storytelling, and conjures up the earthy spirit of the souk and harem without recourse to the djinns and magic carpets of Aladdin or Ali Baba. The play is an ensemble piece with many accents beginning with the frame story of Persian King Shahayer and the Vizier's daughter Scheherezade (Adura Onishile). This then opens out into stories within stories like a set of Chinese boxes which look at love, lust, shame, comedy, dreams and intellectuality.

Stories dramatised include *The Jester's Wife and Her Three Lovers*, a farce of marital infidelity in which the wife hides a pastry cook, greengrocer and butcher in the lavatory. Edward Gibbon saw Islam as 'more liberal than the laws of Moses.' The stories of *Madman and Perfect Love* and *The Ruined Man who Became Rich Again Through a Dream* have a merchant as the central character. The Arab world was a pre-industrial merchant (bazarri) capitalist society with a market economy and monetary system. In fact Muhammad was the Prophet of the Arab merchant, and Engels identified that 'Islam is a religion adapted to townsmen engaged in trade and industry.'

The tale of *Sympathy the Learned* is about a female slave who outwits the greatest intellectuals of Islamic study and can be seen as feminist in its portrayal of women. The Qur'an assumes the existence of slavery and implicitly accepts it although the Islamic world did not operate a slave system of production as in classical antiquity.

Zimmerman's *Arabian Nights* evoke AL Fisher's 'the Arabs were poets, dreamers, fighters, traders' and the Prophet Muhammad's affirmation that 'the ink of a scholar is more holy than the blood of a martyr.'

William S Burroughs - All Out of Time and into Space

THE WILLIAM S Burroughs' *All Out of Time and into Space* exhibition at the October Gallery in London recently showcased his abstract expressionist paintings, drawings and talismanic art objects created in Lawrence, Kansas in the last years of the life of the writer who Mailer hailed as 'possessed by genius.'

Orpheus Don't Look Back (1990) can be seen as key to his artistic creativity: Burroughs as artistic outlaw in the lineage of Villon, Rimbaud's 'derangement of the senses' and Baudelaire's soaring 'heaven or hell' who visits the underworld of junkies, pimps and thieves and returns, although tragically Burroughs killed Eurydice, his wife Joan, in 1951.

Self Portrait (1987) is a vague representation and recalls Burroughs' nickname in Tangier, 'El hombre invisible,' when he turned his back on his bourgeois upbringing and Harvard education, advocating Hassan I Sabbah's dictum: 'Nothing is true, Everything is permitted,' and his heroin addiction inspired the writing of his novel *Naked Lunch* published in 1959.

Death by Lethal Injection (1990) highlights Burroughs' antipathy towards to all forms of control and authoritarianism be they political, economic, religious or sexual; his rejection of the puritan morality of bourgeois Christian civilisation and his aim to 'make people aware of the true criminality of our times.'

Radiant Cat (1988) is a red, green and yellow dayglo painting. The Burroughs 'weltanschauung' was shaped by the Atomic bomb and the Cold War world of the military industrial complex. Burroughs was influenced by Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Vico's circular theory of history (Marx: 'a whole mass of really inspired stuff') and Wilhelm Reich's *Cancer Biopathy*.

Untitled (1988) is spray paint and gunshots on a 'No Trespassing' metal sign. Burroughs opposed rapacious capitalism, detested social class and was an egalitarian



The Prison Scribe, 1990

with anarchistic and Emersonian individualist traits. He wrote that the Industrial Revolution with its 'quantity and quantitative criterion' was a 'death trap'. He saw that international capitalism 'always creates as many insoluble conflicts as possible and always aggravates

existing conflicts.'

The Prison Scribe (1990) is a paint and photo collage depicting Madagascar Lemurs, highlighting his growing concern for the planet, ecology and the environment.

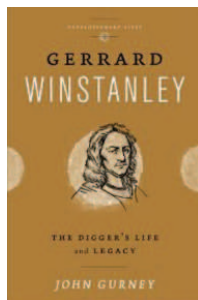
23 (1992) is marker pen and gunshots on watercolour paper and refers to the '23 enigma,' which is a key to understanding the Burroughs universe where 'synchronicity' unlocks the dead thermodynamic 'hostile war universe of winners and losers.'

Burroughs wrote in *Nova Express* (1964): 'Listen all you boards, governments, syndicates, nations of the world / And you powers behind what filth deals consummated in what lavatories, / To take what is not yours, / To sell out your sons forever! To sell the ground from unborn feet forever?'

STEVE CLAYTON

Winstanley

Gerard Winstanley: The Digger's Life and Legacy, by John Gurney. Pluto Press, 2013 £12.99



This is an excellent new book providing a brief history of the life and times of Gerard Winstanley, the seventeenth century utopian communist.

Enough historical context and biographical detail

is provided to get to grips with the subject without becoming too immersed in academic debates and a sense is given of the contested nature of Winstanley's legacy.

One of the points raised by Gurney is that Winstanley was virtually unheard of for over two centuries after his digger writings. British political radicalism up to the latter half of the nineteenth century emphasized the contribution of the Levellers and the defender of parliament against the crown, John Hampden, to political democracy. Winstanley's legacy was mainly focused on his possible contribution to Quakerism. This all changed, however, with the rise of Marxian revolutionary socialism which led to an interest in Winstanley's communism and his rise from historical obscurity. It was the German social democrat, Eduard Bernstein who, in 1895, revived Winstanley's reputation as an early proponent of 'communistic utopia' in his *Cromwell and Communism*.

Today the situation is somewhat reversed and Winstanley is probably the most celebrated radical figure of the English Civil War period. In fact, he is probably emphasised beyond his historical importance – the subject of numerous academic studies and celebrated as a 'forerunner' of socialism, anarchism, libertarianism and back-to-the-land activism. Winstanley's legacy is disputed ground but he cannot with any seriousness be regarded as an early proponent of any of these later social movements. Winstanley responded to the world around him with the intellectual tools available to him. He suffered financial misfortune during the turmoil of the Civil War and his angst was expressed through visionary, millenarian, religious mysticism. The social function of religion was fiercely criticized and future salvation rejected in favour of a religion of conduct on

earth. Reason, for Winstanley, was synonymous with God and covetousness, competition and false dealing resulted from private property and money. The solution he proffered was a social transformation based on the abolition of private property and money and their replacement with common ownership and working in common. Remaining a mystic, social and political experience led him to a materialist conclusion cloaked in religious language – material equality would not come from spiritual enlightenment but precisely the reverse; true religion could only emerge from material equality on earth. After the Civil War period Winstanley withdrew from activism and became a settled and respected local landowner, tradesman and Quaker.

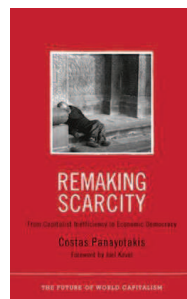
One of his most repeated quotes is: 'Words and writings were all nothing, and must die, for action is the life of all, and if thou dost not act, thou dost nothing.' Ironically his actions came to nothing and it is his words and writings that have survived for posterity. His practical efforts, which involved cultivating common land with fellow Diggers near Cobham in Surrey, failed to attract support. Instead of sympathy, the Diggers faced extreme opposition and violence from the local population on two fronts. First, they were attacked several times whilst at a site on St. George's Hill by locals who used the common to graze cattle and sheep. Second, when they had moved closer to Cobham, they were attacked by the lackeys of the local gentry and they were again subject to violence, including the destruction of houses built by the Diggers. They were forced after just over a year of strenuous effort in the face of vitriolic hostility to give up their practical activity. Their plight is summed up by another of Winstanley's oft-quoted writings: 'For freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down; therefore no wonder he hath enemies...'

It is possible to see in Winstanley's writings the rudiments of the Marxian concepts of alienation and the labour theory of value. This is, though, to see him through the lens of future developments. He was not a forerunner of Marxian socialism but the turbulence of the English Revolution did lead him to lay down writings which offered up a communistic utopia as the solution to the social and economic challenges he faced. The historical turn away from celebrating constitutional political radicalism and towards Winstanley's

communism is interesting and positive. Unfortunately many of the most vocal celebrants of Winstanley, such as The Land is Ours and other land reformers, do not do justice to the depth of the ambition of his communism. A recent interesting development is an annual Digger's festival in Wigan (Winstanley's birthplace). This year is the third such event, to be held on 7th September (wigandiggersfestival.org).
CSK

Democratic scarcity?

Remaking Scarcity: From Capitalist Inefficiency to Economic Democracy, by Costas Panayotakis. Pluto Press, 2011



Economics, as taught in schools and colleges, defines itself as the study of the allocation of limited resources amongst competing wants where these are greater than resources and teaches that

markets and prices arose as the best way to do this. In fact, since it assumes that human wants are infinite, it teaches that scarcity – and markets and prices – will always exist.

Panayotakis rejects the traditional socialist argument that 'scarcity has been conquered' because 'the problem of production has been solved.' He sees scarcity as a fact but argues that free market capitalism is not the most efficient way to deal with it. Naturally, he has no difficulty in showing that capitalism does not allocate resources efficiently to meet human needs.

This, he points out, is due to the fact that 'the true goal of capitalist economies is not to satisfy the wants of consumers, but to pursue profit and a never-ending accumulation of capital.' This 'logic of capital accumulation escapes people's control and subordinates them to its imperatives,' including even the owners and top executives of capitalist firms:

'... the pressure of capitalist competition means that, even to preserve their capital and continue enjoying the privileges, prestige and power associated with their class position, capitalists must tirelessly pursue profit and capital accumulation.'

This makes them essentially 'functionaries of capital,' who don't have a free hand to do what they might want, but only a greater power than the rest of society 'to influence the terms under which they and all other socio-economic groups are subordinated to the logic of capital.' So far, so good.

Panayotakis's thesis is that capitalism fails to deal with the problem of scarcity efficiently because it is an economic oligarchy. The alternative to capitalism is, then, an 'economic democracy' where everybody would have an equal say in how scarce resources are used. He recognises that this implies that the means of production should no longer be owned and controlled by a minority but seems to favour particular productive units being run by workers' co-operatives or councils.

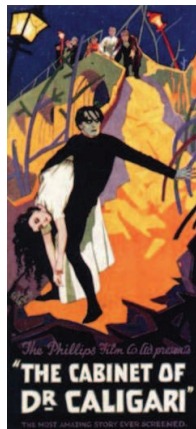
The two models of 'economic democracy' he discusses in detail are so-called 'market socialism' (as in David Schweickart's proposal) and Michael Albert's 'Parecon.' He can see the drawbacks of retaining production for the market, but doesn't make the point that, with market competition, workers' co-operatives too would be forced to behave as 'functionaries of capital' if they wanted to survive.

He is more favourable to 'Parecon' but mentions one critic's description of it as an 'off the shelf utopia.' As indeed it is, though 'off the wall' might be a better description given its endless form-filling

continued page 22

The Cabinet of Dr Caligari

Step Into the Dark season at the Barbican



As part of the *Step Into the Dark* season, the Barbican recently screened the German 'expressionist' silent film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1920) with live piano 'four hands' accompaniment by Neil Brand and John Sweeney. The film was directed by Robert Wiene in 1919 in Berlin and cast Werner Krauss as Dr Caligari and Conrad

Veidt as Cesare the somnambulist. It was made in the revolutionary period after the Great War when film censorship was abolished by the Council of People's Representatives, and a film *Different From the Others* (1919) written by Dr Magnus Hirschfeld could depict homosexuality in a sympathetic light.

Dr Caligari is a tale of hypnosis and murder imbued with fear, gloom, and oppression in a dislocated world. It was written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Meyer in Berlin in February-March 1919. They had both fought in the Great War and their experiences had made them anti-militarist and anti-authoritarian.

1919 in Berlin saw Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, the spontaneous 'Spartacist' working class uprising, described by Paul Levi as 'the greatest

proletarian demonstration in history, proletarians standing shoulder to shoulder with their weapons and red flags ready to do anything.' The SPD government brought in Freikorps soldiers to crush the revolutionary uprising, and socialists Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were brutally murdered.

Dr Caligari has its origins in Janowitz's memories from 1913 of a sex murder in Hamburg, and Meyer's experience of harsh therapy sessions with a military psychiatrist. Janowitz and Meyer also visited a fairground sideshow in Berlin where they saw a man in a hypnotic state predicting the future. *Dr Caligari* indicts authority, war, the state, conscription and the slaughter of millions of the working class in the Great War. Cesare symbolises the human used as a tool and violated by the state, and authority is seen as inherently insane (Dr Caligari and the lunatic asylum director are the same person).

Dr Caligari is celebrated for its 'expressionist' production design by the painters Hermann Warm, Walter Reimann and Walter Rohrig. The designs are reminiscent of Kirchner's 'expressionist' paintings of Berlin streets. The 'expressionist' design is jagged architecture, stark geometrics, and oblique projected chimneys on pell-mell rooftops, tree-like arabesques, and buildings out of 'normal' perspective in chiaroscuro lighting. The aesthetics influenced films *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) and *Batman Returns* (1992) by Tim Burton.

There is controversy about the flashback framing device used in the film which was not in the original story. ►



Christianity's Inanities

GREETINGS, BELOVED! As we struggle through the End Times, let *God TV* be your spiritual guide. Broadcasting worldwide from Jerusalem, and available on Freeview and online, *God TV* brings you the most hyper-enthusiastic speakers and evangelists, filmed at happy-clappy conferences in Britain, Australia and America. Each show is set to an uplifting soundtrack of saccharine God rock and hypnotic muzak.

First, we can go over to the Audacious Conference, where we've been listening to those touched by the Lord. Sarah has been telling us how she was saving up for a family holiday when God told her to empty her bank account and give all her money to the church. Every year since then, she's been blessed with a free holiday. There's no need to worry about throwing away your savings, as God always provides.

And here's *God TV*'s well-provided-for founder Rory Alec, starting his sermon by



quoting from the book of Proverbs that money is the answer to everything. He wants there to be a 'greater portion of anointing', paid for by a greater portion of your incomes. Yes, beloved. He must be right because his disciples are praying and swaying along in the background.

The next inspirational speaker is Jane, at the Influencers Conference. She wants us to accept that we're all unwell by inviting us to stare at those around us: 'Look at the other person on the other side of you. If you look closely, they're shrivelled up'. God can give us the strength to take ownership of our shrivelled-upness and forgive.

Now, we can join Dr Jonathan Sarfati giving a lecture entitled 'Are Miracles Scientific?' He shows us how he earned his doctorate by telling us that miracles must exist because otherwise the notion of a 'hoax miracle' wouldn't make sense. Hear him hilariously call the Enlightenment 'the Endarkenment'. And listen open-mouthed as he teaches us that during the Great Flood 'the ground was cursed', and that God took six days to create the universe because he wanted to give us a handy length for our working week.

Bless you, beloved. Just remember to tune in again, and send in your money.

Mike Foster

Book reviews continued

and voting to try to fix prices and pay that conform to some ideal allocation of scarce resources.

Panayotakis and the others have got themselves into this position of discussing how to calculate prices and pay because they reject the traditional socialist view that, given the abolition of capitalism, enough to satisfy people's needs could be produced and that therefore a socialist society would not have to price or ration goods but could implement the principle of 'from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs'.

ALB

Film review continued

With the framing device Franzis the narrator is seen as insane and the story a figment of his deranged imagination, and the figure of the lunatic asylum director represents benign authority. Is then *Dr Caligari* not a revolutionary but a conformist bourgeois film? But the film's ending is not shot realistically: lines have not been straightened and 'expressionist' perpendiculars removed; we have not returned to conventional reality. All the characters such as Cesare and Jane are in the Lunatic Asylum but where is the 'murdered' Alan? Is Franzis right about *Dr Caligari*?

SC

SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2012

For a copy send 2 second-class stamps to: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN

Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our **Meetup** site: <http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

Glasgow

Wednesday 17 April 8.30pm
THE CURSE OF RACIALISM
Speaker John Cumming
Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 2YE.

Norwich

Saturday 20 April.
East Anglian Regional Branch meeting
12noon: informal chat / branch business
1pm - 2pm: meal
2pm - 4pm: branch business
Quebec Tavern, 93-97 Quebec Road, Norwich NR1 4HY
(The meeting takes place in a side room separate to the bar.)



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the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

A message for Aldermaston Marchers

THIS MIGHT be your last Aldermaston. The March has lost its impact and become an "Easter habit." These marches were originally organised in the belief that with mass support you would be able to force the British Government to renounce nuclear weapons. You have had the support. You have engaged in all types of activity on a vast scale. You have captured the energy and enthusiasm of tens of thousands; you have distributed leaflets and pamphlets by the million. And yet you have failed.

The past six years has seen the development and stockpiling of all types of nuclear weapons in this and other countries.



Polaris submarines (and no doubt their Russian counterparts) keep their patrols day in and day out. Bombers with their loads are on round-the-clock alert. The neutron bomb—"the ultimate weapon"—is on the point of production. In fact, nuclear-wise the world is "hotter" today than ever before. Russia, alike with the other capitalist powers in her concern for expansion and supremacy, proudly tells of her multi-megaton explosions. The British Government defence estimates of £1,838 million will be passed by Parliament without any real opposition. The United States armaments bill this year will be about £19,000 million.

Your protests, both constitutional and direct action, have had no effect on the Government. The Labour Party, like the Conservatives, are committed to nuclear weapons. Your own leaders have spoken evasively and you have found yourselves wavering (...)

We can understand your desire to abolish these weapons, but the position you take is inconsistent and unrealistic. Socialists are opposed to war in all its forms. But first and foremost we are opposed to the capitalist system which gives rise to war among other social problems. You are concerned with removing evils in isolation. This cannot be done.

(From editorial, *Socialist Standard*, April 1963)

ACTION REPLAY

After the Ball Game

LAST MONTH we wrote about the problems encountered by athletes, including Olympians, who are less successful than they expected. But even those who achieve their goals can still find themselves in a bit of a pickle once they retire, with no obvious job to go to. Not everyone can become a coach or a media pundit. As one former hockey player said, 'It's really scary for some athletes, devastating. We've all got rent and mortgages to pay' (*BBC Online*, 17 February).

So in January various sporting bodies organised the first Athletes Career Fair in Reading. It was intended to offer advice to athletes on career possibilities, financial planning and such evergreen topics as writing a CV. Prospective employers were attracted with assurances that 'Ath-



letes offer a wide range of transferable skills,' including 'the ability to perform under pressure.' But having little or no work experience or professional qualifications was for many probably a bit of a handicap as far as employability was concerned.

One Paralympian horse-rider may well lose out as the government saves money by replacing the Disability Living Allowance with the Personal Independence Payment. But at least she was able to boast that gold medals in the London games would help to open doors for her: 'It means I'm now able to sell myself a bit more,' she said at the fair (*Daily Telegraph*, 19 January).

And sadly, selling yourself is precisely the name of the game, not just for athletes and ex-athletes but for the rest of us too. Being one of the best at running, jumping or whatever does not guarantee that anyone will want to buy your labour power once you can no longer run so fast or jump so far. You are just another member of the workforce, hoping someone will employ you, a degrading position to be in.

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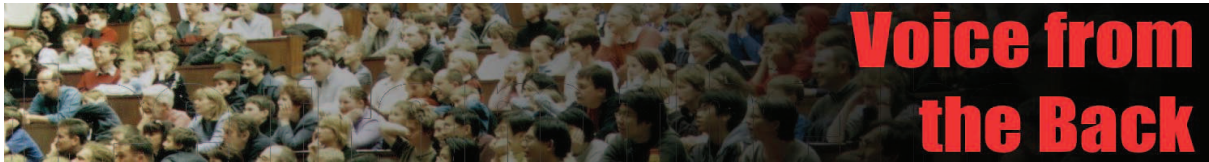
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Voice from the Back

The Great Divide

The class division in capitalism is well summed up by the millions trying to survive on less than \$2 a day and the following news item. 'Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim has topped Forbes magazine's list of the world's richest billionaires for a fourth year. The magazine estimates that Mr Slim, whose business interests range from telecommunications to construction,



is worth \$73bn (£49bn)' (BBC News, 5 March). If you attempt to live on less than \$2 a day your kids will probably die. That is a powerful reason why we need a new society.

A Billionaire Gets Angry

You would think it would be in the interests of billionaires to keep quiet about their riches, but not a bit of it. 'One of the world's richest men, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, has severed ties with the Forbes rich list, claiming it understated his wealth. The Saudi investor, ranked 26th in the billionaires' list released on Monday, accused Forbes of a 'flawed' valuation method that undervalued his assets and 'seemed designed to disadvantage Middle Eastern investors and institutions' (Guardian, 5 March). They estimated that Alwaleed is worth \$20bn (£13bn), putting him behind Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin. Alwaleed estimates his own wealth at \$29.6bn. C'mon why get so upset, Alwaleed, what's a mere \$9.6bn to the likes of you? There's lots of other workers to exploit and billions still to be made.

Harsh Reality

Politicians love to paint a picture of a

Britain of steadily improving standards of living and a gradually more equitable society, but recent statistics show that this is a complete fraud. 'Millions of families will be no better off in 2015 than they were in 2000 due to a devastating attack on household finances, according to Britain's leading think tank. The average worker will have suffered the worst squeeze on incomes in memory by the time of the next General Election, warns the Institute for Fiscal Studies' (Daily Mail, 14 March).

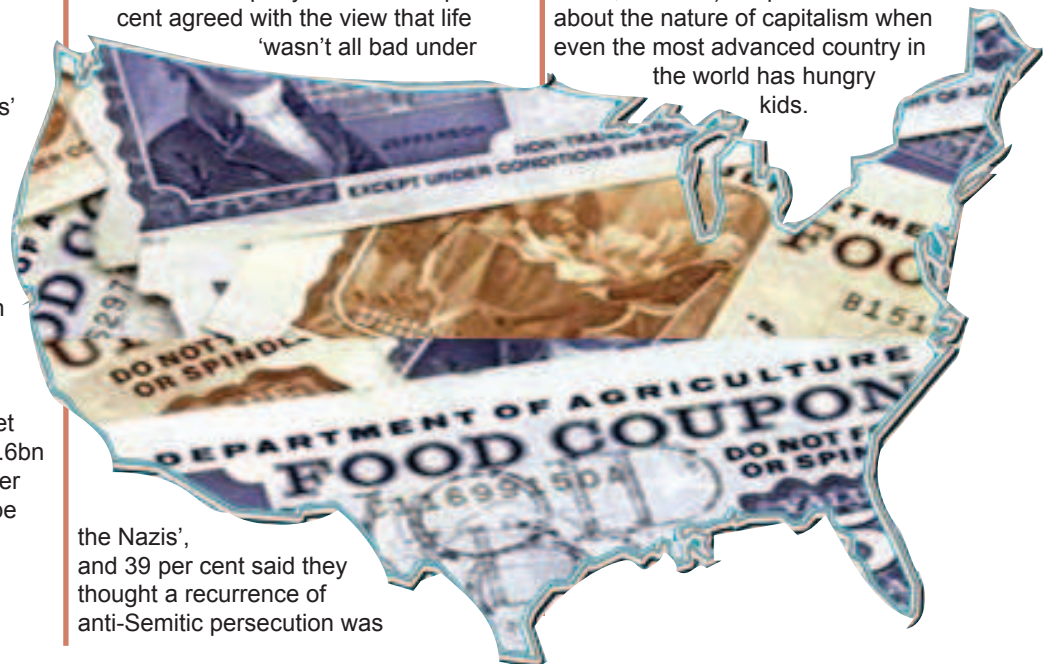
The Roots Of War

The First World War was supposed to be the war to end all wars. 1939 showed the meaninglessness of that notion, but some claimed the Second World War was a war to end fascism and to protect democracy. That now looks like an equally stupid idea. 'As Austria prepares to mark the anniversary of its annexation by Nazi Germany, an opinion poll has shown that more than half of the population think it highly likely that the Nazis would be elected if they were readmitted as a party. A further 42 per cent agreed with the view that life 'wasn't all bad under

likely in Austria' (Independent, 10 March). Wars are not fought for splendid humane principles they are fought for markets, sources of raw materials and political and military reasons. Foolishly workers today are still conned by the nonsense of nationalism and capitalism.

Hunger In The USA

Whenever one hears of children going hungry it is assumed this is a reference to some backward country in Asia or Africa, but recent events show that it applies to even advanced countries like the USA. 'Child poverty in the US has reached record levels, with almost 17 million children now affected. A growing number are also going hungry on a daily basis. Food is never far from the thoughts of 10-year-old Kaylie Haywood and her older brother Tyler, 12. At a food bank in Stockton, Iowa, they are arguing with their mother over the 15 items they are allowed to take with them ... The family are among the 47 million Americans now thought to depend on food banks. One in five children receives food aid' (BBC News, 6 March). It speaks volumes about the nature of capitalism when even the most advanced country in the world has hungry kids.



FREE LUNCH

